(d) The steps being taken by the coal companies to improve the quality of coal supplies to consumers include the following:-

(i) An Action Plan for installation of feeder breakers and coal handling plants is being implemented to ensure quality of coal supplied.

(ii) Stones are being segregated at the time of loading of coal to the extent practicable.

(iii) Power utilities have been requested to post their representatives at loading points to undertake joint sampling of coal before it is despatched to them.

Participation in International Trade Fairs

4605. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Swiss fair ticks off Titan and other 'Made-in-India' exhibits" appearing in the 'Economic Times' dated August 6, 1996;

(b) if so, whether any protest was lodged with the International Fair Authorities against preventing Indian participation in Basle, Switzerland;

(c) if so, the reaction of IFA thereon;

(d) whether the Government propose to lay down some norms for participation in such international trade fairs and rebut the charge of practising a protectionist trade policy in view of India's free trade policy;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reaction of the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). M/s Titan International Marketing Ltd. has made a representation to the Committee of Exhibitors that lays down the criteria for participation in the International Watch, Clock and Jewellery Fair in Basle, Switzerland. However, the Committee of Exhibitors continues to maintain that one of the conditions laid down for participation by a country is that the country should have a liberal trade policy with regard to imports of watches of all origin and import tariff should not be higher than 20 per cent. Thus the matter remains unresolved.

(d) to (f). It is not possible for the Government of India to lay down norms for participation in international fairs organised by foreign private parties outside India. Government has taken up the matter with the Swiss authorities whose initial reaction has been that they have no control over the actions of the Committee of Exhibitors, a private party, that sets the norms for participation. Government is pursuing the matter with the Swiss authorities.

[Translation]

Excise Duty on Marble

4606. PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have received representations from several marble trading organisations and people's representatives to decrease or abolish excise duty on marble and lime stone; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the steps being taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b). There is no excise duty on limestone. Regarding marble, Government have received some representations that the excise duty on marble be abolished or reduced from the existing level of Rs. 30 per square metre. These are under consideration.

Foreign Investment in Agriculture

4607. SHRI DEVI BUX SINGH:
DR. RAMESH CHAND TOMAR:

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of foreign proposals cleared for the investment in agriculture sector during the current year alongwith the details thereof, country-wise;

(b) the names of such companies who have sent the proposals and the names of the States where investment is proposed to be made; and

(c) the details of foreign exchange likely to be received in the country every year?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b). 25 foreign direct investment proposals envisaging foreign direct investment of Rs. 45.03 crores have been approved by the Government during the period from 1.1.96 to 31.7.96 in the Agriculture Sector including Horticulture and Floriculture.

The details of such proposals viz. Name and country of foreign collaborator, equity investment involved, item of manufacture/activity are published by the Indian Investment Centre as a supplement to the Monthly Newsletter and copies of these are regularly supplied to the Parliament Library.

(c) Actual inflow of foreign direct investment is monitored by Reserve Bank of India.

Joint Venture Between India and Israel

4608. SHRI DEVI BUX SINGH:
DR. RAMESH CHAND TOMAR:

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether agreements have been proposed to be signed between India and Israel in the industrial sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Indian industries are also functioning in Israel; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. Agreements have been proposed to be signed between India and Israel for Cooperation in the field of Industrial and Technological Research and Development and in the Small Industries Sector between National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC), India and the Small Business Authority of Israel.

Bilateral agreements between the two countries which have already been signed include the agreement on trade and economic cooperation, agreement between the standards institutes of both countries, agreement on avoidance of double taxation and agreement on investment protection.

(c) and (d). Yes, Sir. Government has granted approval to M/s Indo-Israel Fertilizers & Chemicals Limited, Calcutta for setting up a phosphoric acid manufacturing unit in Israel with an equity investment of US $ 21.84 million. As per information available, the project is under implementation.

[English]

Crisis on Papers

4609. SHRI P.C. CHACKO: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that the domestic paper industry is facing stiff competition due to import of paper at large scale in the country;

(b) whether the paper industry has piled up a buffer stock with them and is on the verge of closure or cut their production drastically;

(c) if so, the details of such companies, State-wise;

(d) the reasons for importing paper at large scale; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to save the interest of the domestic paper industry?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (e). Domestic paper industry is not facing any stiff competition due to large scale import of paper since the country's demand is mostly met by domestic production. There is also no stock-piling with mills nor of curtailment of production or mills being on the verge of closure, due to the large scale import of paper. The country is broadly self sufficient in meeting its requirement of paper.

However, the Newsprint industry is facing some difficulties. On account of availability of cheaper Imports, the customers are not procuring newsprint from domestic industry, leading to accumulation of stock.

Government is seized of the matter.

Performance of PSUs

4610. SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Public Sector Undertakings have shown higher profit during 1994-95;

(b) if so, the names of such Undertakings and the amount of profit earned by each Public Sector Undertakings during the above period;

(c) the names of Undertakings which have showed losses during the above period; and

(d) the details of losses incurred and reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. 130 Public Sector Undertakings have shown higher profits of Rs. 12124 crores during 1994-95 as compared to profit earned by 121 PSUs of Rs. 9768 crores during 1993-94. The names of PSUs which have shown profits during 1994-95 are given in the Statement 7-A of Volume-I of the Public Enterprises Survey 1994-95 laid in both Houses of Parliament on 19.7.96.

(c) and (d). 109 PSUs have incurred loss during 1994-95 as compared to loss by 116 PSUs during 1993-94. The names of the Public Sector Undertakings which have shown losses during the above period are given in the Statement 7-B of Volume-I of the Public Enterprises Survey 1994-95. The reasons for the losses are usually enterprise specific. However, some of the common causes of losses are excess manpower, old & obsolete plant & machinery, outdated technology, erratic power supply, mechanical break-downs, high interest burden, high initial investment, stiff competition with the private sector, low capacity utilization etc.